

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 1049

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OEXC, SCUL, SHUM, CH, US

SUBJ: NORMAN LEAR DELEGATION, SINO-US EXCHANGES

REF: PEKING 1027, PEKING 1029

1. SUMMARY. NORMAN LEAR AND A GROUP OF TELEVISION PERSONALITIES AND WRITERS HAVE HELD EXTENSIVE DISCUSSIONS WITH PRC CULTURAL OFFICIALS, ACTORS, AND ARTISTS. GIVEN RARE ACCESS FOR AN AMERICAN CULTURAL DELEGATION, THE GROUP MET WITH PRC VICE FOREIGN MINISTER HO YING, VICE MINISTER OF CULTURE WANG LAN-HSI AND OTHER CULTURAL OFFICIALS. WANG TOLD THE GROUP THAT PRC CULTURAL FIGURES "WOULD LIKE TO BE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT THE UNITED STATES."
END SUMMARY.

2. NORMAN LEAR, AND A GROUP OF TELEVISION PERSONALITIES AND WRITERS, DEPARTED PEKING APRIL 14 AFTER EXTENSIVE DISCUSSIONS WITH PRC CULTURAL OFFICIALS, ACTORS AND ARTISTS. THE GROUP WAS SPONSORED BY THE CHINESE PEOPLE'S ASSOCIATION FOR FRIENDSHIP WITH FOREIGN COUNTRIES. ENTERING THE PRC APRIL 4 THEY HAVE
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VISITED CANTON, KWEILIN, AND PEKING AND WILL TRAVEL TO CHANGSHA AND SHANGHAI BEFORE EXITING FROM CANTON ON APRIL 25. USLO GAVE A BRIEFING AND RECEPTION FOR THE GROUP ON APRIL 12.

3. THE GROUP HAS BEEN GIVEN RARE ACCESS TO PRC CULTURAL FIGURES AND OFFICIALS, MOST OF WHOM HAVE

BEEN REHABILITATED SINCE THE PURGE OF THE GANG OF FOUR. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE TRIP INCLUDED LENGTHY DISCUSSIONS WITH WANG LAN-HSI, RECENTLY APPOINTED VICE MINISTER OF CULTURE; TING CHIAO, HEAD OF THE MINISTRY'S FILM BUREAU; AND LI LIEN-CHING, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRAL BROADCASTING ADMINISTRATION. VICE FOREIGN MINISTER HO YING'S MEETING WITH THE GROUP REPORTED REFTELS.

4. WANG LAN-HSI, WHO DIRECTS CULTURAL MINISTRY WORK ON FILM, DRAMA, FINE ARTS, AND EXCHANGES, EXPLAINED TO THE GROUP PRC POLICY TOWARD CULTURAL EXPRESSION. WANG SAID THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE "DOES NOT CENSOR CULTURAL EXPRESSION BUT PROMOTES CULTURE." HE ADDED, HOWEVER: AS LONG AS LITERARY AND CULTURAL WORKS ARE PRODUCED "IN THE INTEREST OF THE PEOPLE, WE WILL TOLERATE THEM. IF NOT, WE WILL ELIMINATE THEM." WANG ALSO MAINTAINED THAT THE MINISTRY ENCOURAGES ALL KINDS OF ARTISTIC EXPRESSION AND CLAIMED THAT SCRIPTS WERE NOT REVIEWED UNTIL JUST BEFORE BEING RELEASED TO THE PUBLIC -- AS TATEMENT LATER CONTRADICTED BY TING CHIAO, HEAD OF THE MINISTRY'S FILM BUREAU. WHEN GROUP PRESSED WANG FURTHER ABOUT FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, HE REPLIED, "IF AN ARTIST OR A WRITER IS ANTI-SOCIALIST, THIS WILL INEVITABLY FIND EXPRESSION IN HIS WORK, EVEN IF IT IS A LANDSCAPE PAINTING. WE ARE CONFIDENTIAL

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CULTURALLY BACKWARD, THAT'S WHY WE HAVE A MINISTRY OF CULTURE. AS FOR THE ARTISTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE GANG OF FOUR, THEY MUST ADMIT THEIR MISTAKED AND ACCEPT THE CRITICISM OF THE MASSES. OF COURSE, THEY WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO REASSUME THEIR POSTS."

5. AS THE SESSION WAS ENDING, THE VICE MINISTER STATED: "GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY, WE WOULD LIKE TO VISIT THE UNITED STATES." THE GROUP FELT THAT WANG WAS OPENLY SOLICITING AN INVITATION FOR CULTURAL OFFICIALS AND FIGURES TO VISIT THE UNITED STATES. THEY PLAN TO FOLLOW UP WITH AN INVITATION BUT TOLD USLO THEY DID NOT WANT USG INVOLVEMENT.

6. DURING THEIR TALKS WITH OTHER MINISTRY OF CULTURAL OFFICIALS INCLUDING TING CHIAO, THE GROUP AGREED TO AN INFORMAL EXCHANGE OF FILMS, VIDEOTAPES, AND OTHER MATERIALS. NORMAN LEAR BROUGHT ALONG A NUMBER OF TECHNICAL MANUALS WHICH HE GAVE TO CENTRAL BROADCASTING ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS.

6. GROUP MEMBERS GEOFF COWAN AND AILEEN ADAMS, BOTH LAWYERS, ALSO

MET WITH PEKING COURT OFFICIALS BUT DESCRIBED THEIR SESSION AS UNPRODUCTIVE. AILEEN ADAMS, A MEMBER OF AMNESITY INTERNATIONAL, PRESSED THE OFFICIALS ABOUT PRISON SENTENCES FOR VARIOUS CRIMES, INCLUDING PUTTING UP INFLAMMATORY WALL POSTERS, AND RECEIVED VAGUE ANSWERS (IF HE IS A "CLASS ENEMY" HE WOULD NOT BE SHOT, HE WOULD BE "RE-EDUCATED.")

7. SOME MEMBERS OF THE GROUP PLAN TO WRITE ARTICLES ABOUT THEIR DISCUSSIONS WITH PRC OFFICIALS AND WILL BE CONTACTING THE HONG KONG PRESS CORPS ON ARRIVAL. WOODCOCK

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